

VZCZCXRO6912  
PP RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR  
DE RUEHYE #0112 0441127  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 131127Z FEB 08  
FM AMEMBASSY YEREVAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6993  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 0547  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0131

C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000112

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/12/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [OSCE](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#) [SR](#) [AM](#)  
SUBJECT: NO ARMENIAN FIRST-WAVE RECOGNITION OF KOSOVO --  
KOSOVO HITS VERY SENSITIVE DOMESTIC POLITICS

REF: A. A) STATE 13716  
[B. B\) STATE 14284](#)

Classified By: CDA Joseph Pennington, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Polchief met with the savvy and plugged-in director of the MFA Americas Department, Armen Yeganian, to deliver points from refuels. We left a slightly-slimmed down version of the two cables' talking points -- redacted somewhat in consultation with EUR/CARC to downplay Nagorno-Karabakh (NK) sensitivities -- as a non-paper. Yeganian told us that Armenia was unable to join the first wave of recognitions on Kosovo, because the issue touches so many complicated sensitivities here. He assured that Armenia would also not join the Russian/Serbian camp in fighting the DI. He was not immediately familiar with the OSCE Berlin Mechanism, but agreed with the point that forum shopping seemed inappropriate. Yeganian assured that Foreign Minister Oskanian would closely scrutinize "every sentence" of our non-paper, to inform his decision on this very challenging issue for Armenian policy.

[1](#)2. (C) We have had an ongoing conversations with Yeganian and with the Foreign Minister's adviser Salpi Ghazarian on this issue. Yeganian reminded us of Armenia's difficulties concerning Kosovo. First, Armenia has never formally recognized the breakaway, ethnic-Armenian Azerbaijani province of Nagorno-Karabakh (NK), because of ongoing international sensitivities and Minsk Group peace negotiations over NK. This lack of NK recognition has caused domestic political controversy in Armenia periodically, most recently in parliament this past fall. The GOAM would likely face domestic criticism for recognizing Kosovar independence immediately, while never having done so for its close cousins in NK whose independence declaration is more than a decade old. Second, Armenia has serious worries that the international community will over-emphasize (as the Armenians see it) the uniqueness of the Kosovo situation, and go overboard in declaring "never again anywhere," which may do great harm to the NK negotiating process and to Armenia's core foreign policy goal of seeking the regularization and international recognition of NK's de facto status. A third complication is the fact that Armenia's traditional partner Russia also has strong views on the Kosovo issue.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: The current presidential election season, with election day February 19, has proved surprisingly high-stakes. NK negotiations have been a key theme in the race, with two sides trading exceptionally harsh rhetoric on NK, with each side accusing the other of national betrayal during the NK negotiations. No matter how much we would like to persuade the South Caucasus countries of Kosovo's uniqueness and non-precedential value, there is no avoiding the reality that Kosovo is closely and

nervously watched as a precedent by all sides to the NK dispute. It is extremely unlikely that the GOAM will make any kind of move on Kosovo recognition until it gets through its fractious election, including a possible second round March 4, and any post-election protests that are likely to ensue. Even after that, it will move cautiously.

PENNINGTON